

St. John of the Cross Catholic Cluster

NOTRE DAME du MONT CARMEL

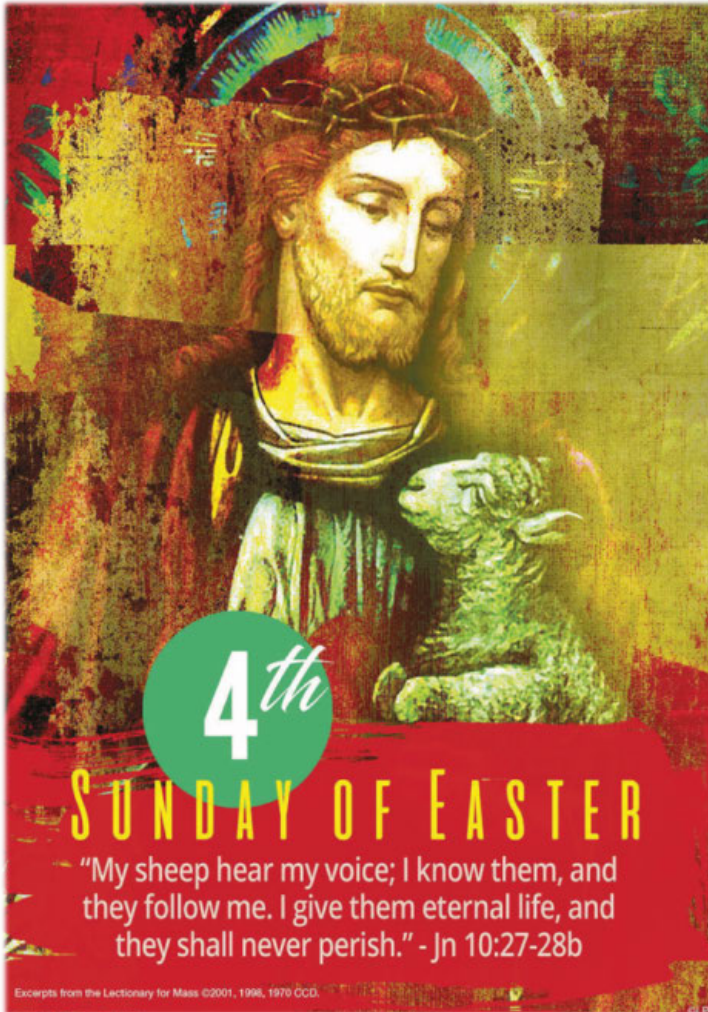
St. David
St. Gerard-Mt. Carmel
St. Thomas Aquinas

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY

St. Agatha
St. Luce
St. Joseph (Sinclair)
St. Michael (Summer Months)

ST. PETER CHANEL

St. Bruno - St. Remi
St. Joseph (Hamlin)



SACRAMENTAL & PASTORAL CARE

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Please call your parish office for appointment.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday before 4pm Mass or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Please call your parish office at least 6 months prior to date.

SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call your parish office.

FUNERALS

Please contact the Cluster 2 business office.

NEW PARISHIONERS

If you are new to the parish or have an address or phone number change, please contact your parish office.

MAY 8, 2022

PASTOR

FR. KENT OUELLETTE

PAROCHIAL VICAR

FR. ALEX

DEACONS

Rev. Mr. Donald R. Clavette

Rev. Mr. Rodney Deschaine

CLUSTER 2 BUSINESS COORDINATOR

Greg Cyr

Cluster 2 Website

www.sjvcatholics.org

Cluster 2 Facebook Site

St John Valley Catholics

NOTRE DAME DU MONT CARMEL

309 St. Thomas Street, Suite 103

Madawaska, ME 04756

Parish Office / Cluster 2 Business Office - 728-7531

notredamedumontcarmel@portlanddiocese.org

Faith Formation Office - 728-7135

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY

379 Main St./PO Box 10, St. Agatha, ME 04772

Parish Office - 543-7447

ourladyofthevalley@portlanddiocese.org

Faith Formation Office - 543-6119

ST. PETER CHANEL

174 Main St., Van Buren, ME 04785

Parish Office - 868-2718

StPeterChanelParish@portlanddiocese.org

Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Mass Schedule

Saturday, May 7 4:00pm ST: (LS) Conrad Leonard (1st Ann) by wife & daughter 6:00pm SG: Lucien Guerrette by Rolande & family	Thursday, May 12 NO MASS / St. Pancras
Sunday, May 8 8:30am ST: For all living & deceased Mothers of NDMC by Pastor 11:00am SD: Rolande Levesque by St. David Ladies of St. Anne	Friday, May 13 Our Lady of Fatima 1:30 pm County Village: Cecile Geoffroy by Lee St. Onge 6:00pm SD: Gilman R. Cyr by Don & Rose Michaud
Monday, May 9 NO MASS	Saturday, May 14 St. Matthias 4:00pm ST: (LS) Gil & Rinette Cyr (1st Ann) by Cliff & Verna Cyr 6:00pm SG: Memorial Mass
Tuesday, May 10 8:00pm ST: (LS) For all the people of NDMC, OLV, & SPC by Pastor	Sunday, May 15 5th Sunday of Easter 8:30am ST: Cecile Geoffroy by Laurant Geoffroy 11:00am SD: Charles Gendreau (1st Ann) by daughter, Sarah Bignotti
Wednesday, May 11 8:30am ST: Norman Chasse by Terry & Anne Blaylock	**(LS) Livestream

Our Lady of the Valley Mass Schedule

Saturday, May 7 6:00pm SA: Jeanne Chamberland by Lloyd & Judy Paradis	Wednesday, May 11 NO MASS
Sunday, May 8 10:30am SL: For all living & deceased Mothers of OLV Parish by Pastor 4:00pm SJ: Deceased family members of Walley & Emelia Dufour by Bob & Carol Chamberlain	Thursday, May 12 St. Pancras 6:00pm SL: Deceased relatives of Michael & Lynda Ouellette
Monday, May 9 6:00pm SA: James Chamberland by Philip & Mary Lou Blanchette	Friday, May 13 NO MASS / Our Lady of Fatima
Tuesday, May 10 8:30am SJ: Gertrude Picard by Paul & Helen Nadeau	Saturday, May 14 St. Matthias 6:00pm SA: Deceased relatives of Michael & Dorina Daigle
	Sunday, May 15 5th Sunday of Easter 10:30am SL: Tyler Kevin Lavoie by Dad & Mom 4:00pm SJ: Gertrude Picard by Mike & Stella Dumais

St. Peter Chanel Mass Schedule

Saturday, May 7 4:00pm SB/SR: Mother's Day Spiritual Bouquets by their Families	Thursday, May 12 NO MASS / St. Pancras
Sunday, May 8 8:00am SJ: Mother's Day Spiritual Bouquets by their Families 9:15am SB/SR: Mother's Day Spiritual Bouquets by their Families	Friday, May 13 NO MASS / Our Lady of Fatima
Monday, May 9 6:00pm SB/SR: Kim Laplante Pelletier by Mom & Dad	Saturday, May 14 St. Matthias 4:00pm SB/SR: All the people of St. Peter Chanel, Notre Dame du Mont Carmel & Our Lady of the Valley by Pastor
Tuesday, May 10 NO MASS / St. Damien de Veuster	Sunday, May 15 5th Sunday of Easter 8:00am SJ: Alban Roy by Bill, Lisa & Family 9:15am SB/SR: Memorial Mass (see Parish page for details)
Wednesday, May 11 5:00-6:00pm SB/SR: Adoration/Confession 6:00pm SB/SR: Anne "Taffy" Taferner by Ray & Judy Marquis	

EUCCHARIST ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS SCHEDULE

	EUCCHARIST ADORATION	CONFESSIONS	MASS
ST. BRUNO/ST REMI	MONDAY 5:00 TO 6:00	5:00 TO 5:45	6:00PM
ST. AGATHA	MONDAY 5:00 TO 6:00	5:00 TO 5:45	6:00PM
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS	TUESDAY 1:00 TO 5:45	5:00 TO 5:45	6:00PM
ST. BRUNO/ST. REMI	WEDNESDAY 5:00 TO 6:00	5:00 TO 5:45	6:00PM
ST. LUCE	THURSDAY 5:00 TO 6:00	5:00 TO 5:45	6:00PM
ST. DAVID	FRIDAY 5:00 TO 6:00	5:00 TO 5:45	6:00PM



Jesus is waiting!



NOTRE DAME DU MONT CARMEL PARISH CORNER
St. David, St. Gerard-Mt. Carmel/Grand Isle, St. Thomas Aquinas/Madawaska

Worship & Spirituality



FOR OUR SICK

Quinn Soucy, Debbrava Levesque, Donna Neill, Carol Roy, Ken Bechard, Kim & Real Pelletier. FMI please call 728-7135. **Please note that after 1 month on the list we will remove the name. You must call back if you want to be put back on. Thank you.

LAMP FOR THE UNBORN BURNS FOR:

St. David - for the Unborn by a Parishioner
St. Gerard - for Vanessa by Lee St. Onge



ST. DAVID SANCTUARY LAMP BURNS IN MAY FOR:

Roland, Bernard Michaud & Claude Dube by Fernande Dube

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SANCTUARY LAMP BURNS IN

MAY FOR: Deceased Relatives of M/M Albert Pelletier by JP

ST. GERARD SANCTUARY LAMP BURNS IN MAY FOR:

Lewis & Aurore Ouellette by Ouellette Family
Gabriel (Gabe) Sebastian by Family



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Tuesday, May 10th / 1pm-5:45pm
at St. Thomas Aquinas Church

INTENTION: For vocations to the priesthood, religious life & seminaries and for our area businesses and their workforces.



WELCOME!!

Janice Soucy

&

Jorge Garcia



Who were initiated into the Catholic Church
through the Sacraments of Confirmation & 1st Eucharist
on Holy Saturday, April 16, 2022

FATIMA ROSARY: Recited every 13th of each month at
12pm (noon) at St. Gerard Church. All are welcomed.

Please Pray for our Military Service Members



"Lord hold our Troops in your
loving hands.

Protect them as they protect us.

Bless them and their families for the selfless
acts they perform for us in our time of need."

**Matt Charette, Alex Sirois, Kyle Blanchette,
Erica Blanchette, Billy Blanchette, Alyssa Nelson,
Cody Belanger, Dominic Belanger & Ian Toussaint**

If you would like to have a Service
Member listed,
contact **Charlie** at 207-316-3382.



St. George, Patron of Soldiers, Pray for our Soldiers!

Finance & Administration

Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Financial Update

Offertory: July 1, 2021 to April 24, 2022

Budget: \$283,635 **Actual:** \$287,240 **Over Anticipated:** \$3,606

	Amount given	Weekly goal
St. David	\$1,806	\$1,745
St. Gerard	\$ 823	\$1,032
St. Thomas Aquinas	\$3,188	\$3,819
Weekly Totals	\$5,817	\$6,596

WeShare Online Giving: \$ 397

Catholic Home Mission Appeal: \$ 1,245

††REST IN PEACE

Please pray for those who have died and for their families:

† **Yvon Dufour, 90**, who passed away on April 23. He was a
member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish



Parish Life

DAUGHTERS OF ISABELLA PRAYER LINE: If you are in need
of prayers for you or a loved one, the Daughters of Isabella can
help through the Prayer Line. This is open to anyone – not only for
members. To add a name to the prayer line, call
Lucy Cyr at 436-9673.

DAUGHTERS OF ISABELLA MEETING: Monday, May 9, rosary
at 5pm, meal at 5:15pm followed by meeting. We will have a pizza party
(\$5.00). FMI call Rose at 728-6388.

ST. DAVID LADIES OF ST. ANNE: Monday, May 16 at 2:30pm
in the St. David Church rectory (downstairs) **Please notice
change of day!**

ST. GERARD LADIES OF ST. ANNE: Monday, May 18. Social is
from 5-6 at the Grand Isle Community Center. Supper will be
turkey dinner and all the trimmings. Free for all members. We will
be doing awards for 2020 to 2022 & we will play games. Join us
for a great evening.

Community Events

YOUR ST. THOMAS FOOD PANTRY IS HERE FOR YOU:

If you are struggling and need food in these difficult times, we are here
for you. Applications available at Frenchville and Madawaska Town
Offices. You can also pick one up when you come pick up a box. Drive
by St Thomas Aquinas Church parking lot, wear mask & open trunk of
your car. **Food boxes will be available on May 18 from 8-10am .
Senior boxes will be available on May 23 from 8-10am.** FMI call
pantry at 728-7531.

CHARLMAGNE CARD PARTY: Thursdays starting May 5, from 12:30-
2:30pm at Madawaska Senior Center. Come and meet your friends.

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY PARISH CORNER
St. Agatha, St. Joseph/Sinclair, St. Luce/Frenchville, St. Michael Chapel

Worship & Spirituality

PRAYER LINE CONTACTS

St. Joseph: Cecile Ouellette 543-6073

SANCTUARY LAMP: Burns for:

St. Agatha: Ulric & Antoinette Ouellette
by Ronald & Joan Ouellette

St. Luce: Mark Dumond by Kevin & Kim Lavoie

St. Joseph: Phil Deschaine by Charlene & Family



ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday's 5:00-6:00pm with Mass at 6:00pm at St. Agatha
Thursday's 5:00-6:00pm with Mass at 6:00pm at St. Luce



Finance & Administration

Our Lady of the Valley Financial Updates

Offertory: July 1, 2021 to April 24, 2022

Budget: \$152,981 **Actual:** \$148,292 **Under Anticipated:** -\$4,689

	Amount Given	Weekly Goal
Weekly Totals	\$3,027	\$4,167
	This Year	Last Year
Average Collections	\$3,449	\$3,352

WeShare Online Giving: \$225

Catholic Home Missions Appeal: \$644.57

††REST IN PEACE

Please pray for those who have died and for their families:

† **Jacqueline Tardif, 88**, who passed away on April 27. She is a member of St. Luce Parish in Frenchville.

† **Aaron Michael Ouellette, 44**, who passed away on April 24. He is the son of Michael & Lynda Ouellette of St. Luce Parish in Frenchville.



WELCOME TO OUR FAITH COMMUNITY

Dawson Donat Soucy
Son of Jake & Jill Soucy



ST. JOSEPH FOOD PANTRY IN SINCLAIR

Serving St. Agatha, Sinclair and Cross Lake

If you are in need of food in these difficult times, we are here for you. If you are a senior you may qualify for a senior box and food box every month.

Food is given every **first Tuesday** of every month also senior box and this is a drive thru pick up, just open trunk and we will load the box of food for you. Pick up time is 1-3pm.

Please wear a mask!

FMI call Cecile Ouellette @ 543-6073 or 543-5057
Monday thru Friday from 1-4pm

Application will be completed over the phone due to COVID-19



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

May 17 - Officer's meeting - 6:30pm at the basement of the St. Agatha Church. Come in from the back of the church.

All members are encouraged to attend

May 26 - Member's meeting and dinner. St. Agatha Church
Dinner served at 5:30pm - meeting at 6:30pm

Bring your wives, friends, possible candidates, family members

ST. PETER CHANEL PARISH CORNER

St. Bruno-St. Remi Church/Van Buren, St. Joseph Church/Hamlin & Borderview Nursing Home

ST. BRUNO-ST. REMI CHURCH SPONSORS

BREAD & WINE SPONSOR / IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Cheryl Cote Cyr (25th Ann 3/24)
with love by her Family

SANCTUARY LAMP SPONSOR / IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

John Desjardins (Wedding Ann 5/10) love Nora

Bread & Wine & Sanctuary Lamp Sponsors:

There are currently available dates for the 2022 new year for Bread & Wine (\$25) and Sanctuary Lamp (\$15) sponsors. Please consider coming into or calling the office to reserve your dates to memorialize a family member while helping to defer Parish costs.

Thank you for your consideration. God Bless.

St. Peter Chanel Outreach Committee News

Food Pantry News:

Thank you for helping everyone fight food insecurity, and returning empty boxes or totes for us to repack.

Our Next Curbside Distribution for May is actually Thursday, June 2, 1-2:30pm.

Food shipments come on the last Tuesday of each month.

We are on call the rest of the month!

For food extras/emergencies: Nancy 484-1231, Bob 868-5623, Harvey 868-5679 & Norman 498-9570.

Prayer Line: If you or a loved one is in need of prayer, the Daughters of Isabella Circle 464 are hosting a prayer line to offer prayers to our Lord Jesus for those in need.

Requests can be made by calling

Anne at 868-2691 or Cecile at 868-3987.



Come To The Well Woman's Group

When: Monday Evenings @ 6:30

immediately following the 6 pm Mass

Where: Meeting Room downstairs at St Peter Chanel Parish

Cup of Joe Men's Group

When: Saturday morning from 7:15—8:30 a.m.

Where: Meeting room in the Parish Hall

All are welcome!!



MAY/MONTH OF THE ROSARY

During the month of May,
we will recite the Rosary daily
in the St. Bruno-St. Remi Church parking lot by the
Shrine of Mary.
It will begin at noon



SECOND COLLECTIONS / May 2022

May 26th (Thursday) The Ascension

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Columbiettes Spaghetti Dinner Raffle Winners

1/2 & 1/2 winner was John Pelletier

Quilt winner was Joe Cyr // Wreath winner was Eva Cyr

Finance & Administration

St. Peter Chanel Parish Financial Updates

Offertory: July 1, 2021 to April 24, 2022

Budget: \$115,769 **Actual:** \$117,517 **Over Anticipated:** \$1,748

Amt. Given \$2,769

Weekly Goal \$2,692

This year \$2,733

Last year \$2,708

WeShare: Online Giving: \$ 0

Catholic Home Missions Appeal: \$133



Bulletin Memorials In Loving Memory of:



Marquis & Cyr Families by Ray & Judy Marquis	Prayers For Peace in The World by Glenn Madore	Fred St. Pierre by his wife Jean & Family
Madore & Rossignol Families by Carlene & Sheila	Ernestine & Edmond Doucette by Don, Mike & Alan	Patrick Thibodeau by Yolande & Family
Janet Michaud by Lorance Chamberland	Simone Vaillancourt by her Family & Friends	Gerald Morrow by Diane, Dan, Megan & Tiffany
Darold Pelletier by his wife, Gloria & Family	Antoine Levesque by his wife, Irene	Lajoie & Marquis Families by Mike & Marie Lajoie
Tardif, Parent & Young Families by Ron & June & Family	St. Pierre & Marquis Families by Paul & Helen St. Pierre	Edmond & Bella Pelletier & boys, David & Darold by Chris & Terry Berube
Kim & Bobbie Pelletier by John & Leslie Beaulieu	Deceased Members of the Chamberland Family by Lorance Chamberland	Leonhard Adam by Ella & Sharon
Martin & Deveau Families by Ron & Della Martin	Bell & Labreck Families by their Family	Betty Paradis by her Family
Bobbie & Kim (Laplante) Pelletier by Ron & May Ouellette	Joseph Sytulek Love, his wife, Eileen & Family	Shana Farmer Pelletier B-day 4/6 & Anniv. 4/28 Love Mom & Dad

ST. BRUNO-ST. REMI / VAN BUREN

MEMORIAL MASS INTENTIONS MAY 15, 2022

Jack & Cecilia Lagasse	by the Class of 1949
Aline Dube	by Ray & Judy Marquis
Crystal Laplante	by her Family
Cindy (Stewart) Martel	by Bob & Kathleen Beaulieu
Claude L. Ouellette	by Mike, Rachel & Family
John Lajoie	by Bernard & Priscilla Ayotte
Mary Dumond	by John & Noreen Pelletier
Beatrice Rossignol	by Eldon Dionne & Family
Patrick Chasse	by Marion Apartment Friends
Rachel R. Ouellette	by Carlene Madore
Dolores Cyr	by Aline Cyr
Phil Marquis	by Steve & Marilyn Lajoie
Carline Boucher	by Don, Bobbie & Chris
Juliette Soucy	by Greta & Rodney Soucy
John Morrill	by Gil & Kim Lajoie
Clarence Boutot	by his mother, Yvonne Boutot
Linda Dumas	by her husband, John Dumas
Connie Lapierre	by Leona Dumont Gagnon
Joey R. Ouellette	by John & Tammy Cyr
Gilman Morin	by the VB Columbiettes
Josie Violette	by her Family
Katrina Nadeau	by Nicole & Family
Allen & Lillian LeFleur	by their Daughter
Leo James Cormier	by Linda, Debbie & Armand
Sister Emelda Parent	by Leah Sirois
Verna Gagnon	by Gerald & Kathleen Cyr

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS CATHOLIC CLUSTER / DIOCESAN CORNER

Pastor's Corner



"My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one." (John 10:27-30) The previous quote is the entire Gospel reading for this Fourth Sunday of Easter. Just the first line is packed with much for us to last a good long time in reflection. In my own times of *lectio divina* with this passage I have been given these words and phrases to reflect on: "hear", "know", "follow me", "I give them eternal life" and "the Father and I are one". These words and phrases, especially the first three, have led me to meditate often on obedience. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says concerning the obedience of faith: "To obey (from the Latin ob-audire, to 'hear or listen to') in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself." This brief passage has become for me the seed for understanding how to become a saint—and we should all be striving to become saints. The other readings for this weekend certainly point in the direction of becoming saints by the obedience of faith. "After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue." (Revelation 7:9) the eternal life given to those who are obedient points to the reality that the intimate unity between Jesus and the Father is meant, in its own way, to be ours as well. Take some time this week to begin, if you have not already done so, to make it a habit to read and reflect meditatively on the words of Scripture.

With my prayers,

Fr. Kent

The strong recommendation for wearing masks has been removed. Those wishing to continue wearing a mask are welcome to do so!!

MEMORIAL MASS INTENTIONS Saturday, May 14 at St. Gerard at 6:00pm

Ronnie, Joel & Herman Michaud Scott B. Cyr	by Bob & Leola Cyr by Joan Carrier & Matt Michaud
Deceased Relatives Roger Lavertu Herman J. Fortin Eddie Bellefleu Agnes & George Fortin Adrien 'Bee' Pelletier St. Jude Favor obtained Joyime & Corinne Cyr Rosaire & Blanche Blanchette Fr. Ronald Laharre Anne Beaulieu	of George Morneault by John & Noreen Pelletier by Michael & Ester Tolleson by Bob & Verna Beaulieu by Gil Fortin & Edna Deprey by Dorine Martin by GED by Bob & Leola Cyr by family by Fr. Kent Ouellette by St. Gerard Ladies of St. Anne

St. John Valley Senior College

FMI: Call 728-3371

Line Dancing with Warren & Joan Harvey: Wednesdays, May 11 to June 29, from 6:00 to 8:00pm at the Fort Kent Knights of Columbus Hall.

ST. THOMAS GIFT SHOP

St. Thomas Aquinas Church Basement

**HOURS: Mon. - Thurs. 9am - 3pm & Friday 10am - 3pm
or by appt., Call 728-4346/316-8062 Lee**

**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL THE MOMS!!
MAY GOD BLESS YOU!!**

GREETING CARDS: GRADUATION CARDS We have a wonderful assortment of Graduation Cards - prices range from \$1.59 to \$1.99 Also have money holders to put your monetary gift.

BOOKLET: "St. Michael - Manual for Spiritual Warfare"

Helping readers to be spiritual warriors in their homes, places of work, and other areas of influence. \$4.95

CRUCIFIX: 8" Tomaso Roma Hand-Painted Crucifix - Wood Cross Resin Corpus Gift Boxed \$19.95 (HS105)

VISOR CLIPS: We have quite an assortment - Miraculous Medal - St. Michael/Guardian Angel - St. Christopher/Guardian Angel - St. Benedict - Angel for a Nurse - For Son, Daughter, Grandson, Granddaughter.

NEW: St. Joseph Prayer Card with a LED Flashlight Flashlight takes 3 AAA batteries which we included. Great idea for a gift for Mom/Dad or anyone! \$6.50

GARDEN STATUE: 20" Jesus with Child in His Arms Stonresin - Beautiful addition to any flowerbed or sitting area in your yard. Engraved on front: Children are a gift from God. Reg. Price \$120. Our Price \$110. (YD072)

12" St. Joseph holding Jesus The Step Father of Jesus - The Care-taker of Mary, Jesus' Mother - what more do we want in our homes. He is always there to help us along with his Step-Son. Only \$32.95 (MS016) (This is now less than the price of an 8" statue!!)

BOOKS: "Jesus Calling For the Graduate"

A wonderful "companion" for your graduating child/grandchild, as he/she go on with their lives in a world that will attempt to turn them from God. 5 minutes per day of reading in this book, will help them keep on the right track and will remind them that Jesus is there, every step of the way, to help them face the challenges they will meet in their new lives. Only \$12.95

KIDS: "Jesus Speaks to Me on My First Holy Communion":

(We have 2 different ones!) In this unique gift book, Jesus speaks warmly and lovingly to children who are receiving him in the Eucharist for the first time. In addition to twelve Bible scenes, there are pages to record memories, including photos, church programs, and space for children to write or draw. Ages 7 to 11 \$12.95

"10 Commandments Picture Book"

Wonderful little book for your young. Only \$3

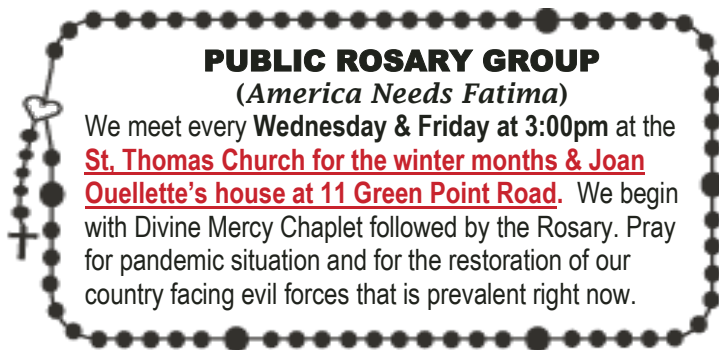
THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR CHILD IS READ ALOUD TO HIM/HER!

Also, Gift Certificates are always available!!

PUBLIC ROSARY GROUP

(America Needs Fatima)

We meet every **Wednesday & Friday at 3:00pm** at the **St. Thomas Church for the winter months & Joan Ouellette's house at 11 Green Point Road.** We begin with Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by the Rosary. Pray for pandemic situation and for the restoration of our country facing evil forces that is prevalent right now.



May 8, 2022 4th Sunday of Easter

"Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start." (Pope Francis) We have a difficult time figuring out what is true and best for us. There are many voices talking and so many trying to get our attention. We wrongly convince ourselves that the true voice is the voice of progress, the one that speaks of contemporary wants and desires, enticing us with the latest trends and causes. We are taught, by listening to the voices around us, that truth is found in feelings and thought, and ideals must match current and popular human wants. Because we feel a particular way it must be true. Then, we find a shepherd who empathizes with us and affirms us. We follow that voice even though listening to that voice will render us powerless and lead us to harm. There are many with me in this procession to this pasture. I must be on the right path and listening to the right voice.

We are very confused. What can keep us safe and from harm? Where do we go to find life, love, and happiness? Jesus tells us that he is the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to get to Truth, who is God, is through him. There is no other way. The Church, the gate around God's pasture of life, is charged with the mission of directing us where God desires that we go. In the midst of all of the conflicting voices around us, the voice of truth is often muffled in all of the noise, but it beckons us to a life of virtue and grace. Helping us understand who we are and where we have to be, it discerns the voice of God, providing us with the safety net we need to stay straight on our path to life eternal.

We have to trust the voice of God, the true Shepherd, even when it does not mirror what we want and what others may believe. Faith goes way beyond feeling and involves a radical trust in Someone who can lead us and form us. At day's end, if we do not know to find our way home, we will be truly lost.

Reluctant Sheep

Sheep get an awfully bad rap, linguistically. Some are quick to label people as "sheep" if we think they haven't sufficiently questioned authority or if they're too willing to go along with someone else's plan. We say someone has "the wool over their eyes" if they aren't willing to see what we think is very obvious. "A wolf in sheep's clothing" is what we call someone looking to take advantage of those too gullible to identify a real threat.

Taking all this into account and considering how often we are referred to as sheep in Scripture, you've really got to wonder if God trying to tell us something about ourselves.

If you look at the phraseology associated with sheep, it's no wonder that nobody *wants* to be one. Sheep are innocent. Sheep can't protect themselves. They're vulnerable and easily misled.

We want to see ourselves as the opposite of all that. We like to think we're shrewd, with plenty of common sense. We want to believe that we don't have to rely on anybody for anything. We would sooner identify with the wolf than with the sheep — at least the wolf can take care of himself.

We do this because we often resist the need to rest in the greatness of God. Like a child walking to school alone for the first time (forgetting his mom is following watchfully in the car), we want to think we can handle it all by ourselves.

The truth is that God *is* trying to tell us something by comparing us to sheep: *You don't have to do this on your own.*

Every time I look at an obstacle and think that there is no way around it, I am forgetting that I have a shepherd who knows the location of the gate.

Question:

I have a friend who says she doesn't need to attend Mass because she prays to God every day. What are your thoughts on this justification?

Answer:

If the only reason for going to church were to talk to God, your friend might be right. Prayer is not something limited to a physical place or even a holy place. If the sole purpose of the Church were prayer, it would be a narrow purpose indeed. The Church is a community of believers, formed by "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism." It is an outward sign of our faith in God instituted by Christ, and the purpose of the Church is to give us grace, that is, a share in God's life.

Coming to Mass is not really for God's sake, but for ours. If we believe that Jesus is truly present in the holy Eucharist, then we will want to be in his presence. We will want to be fed by him. Our daily prayer and good works are strengthened by our authentic encounter with our Lord. For Catholics, it is at Mass that we celebrate the source and summit of our faith. If this is true, why would we ever stay away?



Children's Corner

PUZZLE

Find your way through the bible maze.



MISSION

Every night before you go to bed, read from a Bible storybook. Ask God to help you love him more and more.

DOC
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